

## *Module 2: Essential Principles for Care*

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### **Handout N: Tips For Working With The System**

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#### **Be persistent.**

It can be difficult to find the right person to talk to, or even to talk to a “real” person on the phone. Expect that you’ll have to call several times to make an appointment or get the information you need. Don’t give up when you don’t get through the first (or second or third) time.

#### **Be informed & prepared.**

Try to find out what you need to know and do in advance. It can be frustrating to sit in a waiting room for a long time only to be told that the doctor can’t do the exam without the school forms.

#### **Get help.**

If you know that certain situations make you nervous, bring a friend or family member to support you. If language or reading may be a problem, bring someone who can help or ask for assistance from the agency.

#### **Save your energy.**

You may have many different service providers. Try to schedule appointments to do as much as possible in the same location and in one trip. If having several “case managers” is too confusing, say so. Your service providers should cooperate with each other to help make things easier and clearer for you.

#### **Write it down.**

If you have questions, write them down at home as you think of them, and take them to the appointment. If your health provider tells you important information, such as how to give a medication, write it down or ask her to give it to you in writing. It’s best not to rely on your memory alone, especially when there’s a lot of information and you may be nervous or stressed.

#### **Go to the top.**

If you feel you’re being treated badly or given incorrect information, politely ask to speak to a supervisor. Make sure to get the name of the employee with whom you’re having a problem. The supervisor has more authority and may be more helpful.